

KLS Helping Kansans Get Their Driver's Licenses Reinstated



By Micah Tempel, Director, Suspended to Reinstated Project, KLS.

More than 200,000 Kansans have a suspended driver's license, and the vast majority of these suspensions — 150,000 — have nothing to do with dangerous driving or posing a public safety risk on the roads. Instead, an inability to pay a traffic fine or missing a court date leads most Kansans to a suspended license, compounding their economic hardships by making it illegal for them to drive to work, to the grocery store, and to take their children to school.

Individuals with suspended licenses then become entangled in a cumbersome web of bureaucracy that can quickly spiral out of control with extra fees added to underlying charges, making repayment even less likely. As these costs grow, so do the criminal penalties for driving with a suspended license. In a worst-case scenario, these penalties can land a person in jail for months.

Kansas Legal Services' new Pro Bono Innovation Fund, called "Suspended to Reinstated," endeavors to help Kansans escape this cycle with the help of a recent

award of more than \$334,000 from the nonprofit Legal Services Corporation. KLS was one of only 17 organizations nationwide to receive an LSC award as part of the corporation's \$5 million program to support pro bono legal services for low-income Americans.

This new project aims to recruit at least 25 attorneys and 20 law student interns to conduct driver's license reinstatement clinics throughout the state during the next two years. At the clinics, Kansans with suspended driver's licenses can meet with pro bono attorneys from their communities who will help them navigate the system and get their licenses reinstated. And unlike other clinics, clients at these will have someone in their corner throughout the process. After the clinics are done, KLS and their volunteer attorneys will routinely follow up with the clients to help them along the path of driver's license reinstatement.

In the past several years, KLS has conducted numerous such clinics throughout the state and received great support from private attorneys. In Wichita, KLS and the clients were delighted to have the help of tremendous attorneys including Christy Campbell of Franklin Law Office, Bach Hang of the Sedgwick County Public Defender's Office, and Robert Moody of Martin Pringle.

If you are an attorney who would like to be a part of helping KLS in this new project, please contact us at klsprobono@klsinc.org.

KLS will provide training and CLE credit to any attorney willing to help make Kansas a better place by removing barriers to justice for our most vulnerable citizens and continue KLS's decades-long tradition of providing legal representation to individuals unable to effectively access the justice system.

[Go here to see our scheduled clinics for 2024. The page will be updated as more clinics are scheduled.](#)



Micah Tempel

Micah is an attorney at Kansas Legal Services and the new project director of

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Table of Contents

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